

## MEMORANDUM

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## NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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October 4, 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI  
 FROM: ROBERT PASTOR *RP* ✓  
 SUBJECT: Impact of U.S. Human Rights Policy in Latin America

*Good.* After our discussion at the staff meeting last week, I tasked the CIA to do an overall assessment of the impact of our human rights policy in the Southern Cone. No one questions that the sensitivities of certain government and military officials have been affected by the human rights policy; the important questions are whether our long-term relationships will be strengthened or harmed by the policy and whether the policy has led, and will continue to lead, to improvements in the human rights situations in those countries and in others.

While the human rights policy may be a good instrument of ideological diplomacy in other areas, I don't think that ought to be one of our purposes in this hemisphere. I was working under the impression that the goals of our human rights policy include: to contribute to a climate in which human rights are increasingly respected and the costs of repression have increased as well; to identify the United States with a universal cause, which you have described as "the increasing self-assertiveness of man on behalf of his own human rights"; and to project the U.S. as an idealistic, moral nation actively working toward a better world.

If our overall human rights policy is to be effective and credible, one aspect needs to be that we have warmer and closer relationships with those governments which share our ideals and cooler and more distant relationships with those governments that don't. This necessarily means that our relations with the military governments in the Southern Cone should range from being cordial and correct--as in the case of Brazil, where we have a wide range of consultative mechanisms--to being distant, as in the case of Chile, where the Letelier investigation currently prevents us from taking any other position.

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Another element of our policy should be a willingness, at appropriate times, to back up our rhetoric with actions, many of which are mandated by law anyway. At the same time, we need to continue to distinguish between the three different "baskets" of human rights in implementing our policy. For example, with respect to Argentina, we have informed the government that our concern with human rights there is focused on basket #1 (integrity of the person), and we recognize and accept the government's assessment that democratization is a long-term goal.

I am sending you a couple of articles that were in the New York Times in the past year, which deal with this subject. I would be very interested in your comments on these articles and on my perception of our human rights policy.

cc: Jessica Mathews OK

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# Senor Carter, Si!

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By Andres Oppenheimer

A few months ago, when I returned to Argentina after a year on a scholarship in the United States, I was surprised to find the same picture in many people's homes.

It wasn't a portrait of Carlos Gardel, the top Argentine tango hero, nor of Juan D. Perón, the late dictator. It was a picture of Jimmy Carter, with an American flag behind him.

Since 1977, when he began his human rights campaign, Mr. Carter has gained a popularity in many South American countries that no other American President has enjoyed since John F. Kennedy. Although he is frequently criticized by the official Argentine press for allegedly interfering in the internal affairs of the country, Mr. Carter's autobiography, "Why Not the Best?", Spanish translation, is sold by the thousands in Buenos Aires bookstores and newspaper stands. In Once, the Buenos Aires garment district, one wholesaler sells "Jimmy" T-shirts in many colors and designs.

The emerging Carter cult has reached Argentine liberals, who were traditionally anti-American and for whom Uncle Sam had always been an imperialistic, bloodthirsty ogre. The liberals find themselves in the uneasy situation of equally opposing the brutal terrorism of the guerrillas and the cruel repression of the secret police.

Since no political activity is permitted in the country, the liberals have no way of pressing the Government to take a stronger stand on human rights violations. Suddenly, Mr. Carter has emerged as their unexpected ally.

A journalist with whom I worked at Siete Dias, one of Argentina's leading magazines, and who now lives in Mexico, recently wrote me a letter saying: "We have to admit it. North Americans are not as nasty as we always thought." This is the same man who had been arrested in 1973 for throwing stones at the United States Embassy in Buenos Aires during a demonstration against Washington's involvement in the military coup that ousted President Salvador Allende Gossens in Chile.

Likewise, when Rosalynn Carter visited Brazil last June, university students all over the country went on strike to protest against the military Government, and some tried to get a private interview with her. A few years earlier, the threat of violent demonstrations by Brazilian students had caused Henry A. Kissinger, then Secretary of State, to cancel a scheduled visit.

The 400,000 Jews who live in Argentina

appreciated his efforts to obtain liberty for Jacobo Timmerman, Zionist and former publisher of the newspaper La Opinión, who is he has never stood trial and was being held in prison "at the disposition of the executive power" although cleared of criminal charges by a military court considering alleged financial irregularities.

Despite the general feeling that neither President Jorge Rafael Videla nor his closest staff members are anti-Semites, Argentine Jews fear that many young officers in the armed forces have strong anti-Jewish sentiments.

As a member of the Jewish community in Buenos Aires put it: "At the moment, we can't say there is an anti-Semitic explosion in the country. But there is something not kosher floating in the air, and Mr. Carter's speeches can't do anything but good."

When I returned from Argentina to the United States last fall, I found, to my surprise, that it had become a popular sport among American journalists to attack Mr. Carter's human rights campaign. It was said that the President condemned human rights violations in South American countries but didn't stand against similar abuses in other parts of the world strategically more important to the United States, such as South Korea.

It is true, President Carter is inconsistent. But isn't some morality in American foreign policy better than no morality at all?

The idea that President Carter is interfering in the internal affairs of the countries he accuses of violating human rights is also unacceptable. Intervention was, for instance, the landing of 40,000 Marines in Santo Domingo, in 1965. President Carter's rights campaign, in the case of Argentina, is nothing other than building international pressure against certain right-wing groups in the armed forces who abuse political prisoners and are beyond the control of their own Government.

Journalists and policy-makers in the United States should be aware of President Carter's rising popularity in the rest of the Hemisphere. The long-term effects of his human rights campaign are still to be seen, but Mr. Carter may have already gained some important results. At least he has begun to end a traditional dogma of the South American intelligentsia—to be, unconditionally, anti-Yanqui.

Andres Oppenheimer, an Argentine journalist, is a student at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

# Carter, Si!

By Elio Gaspari

RIO DE JANEIRO—It seems that underdeveloped countries, starting with Latin America's, have a better understanding of President Carter's human rights policy than the United States.

Why? Because of the "perception gap" between North and South: If it is true that people living in tropical countries don't quite grasp the importance, the cost and the need for energy to keep the thermostats up in cold countries, it is equally true that many Americans and others don't really understand what torture, political assassination and cultural obscurantism are all about. Just as tropical populations don't have a winter season, United States citizens don't have three months of dictatorship a year.

Having their basic human rights granted, United States citizens can afford to nourish doubts about the advantages of such a policy. To begin with, President Carter's human rights concern doesn't provide any immediate or visible gain to people in New York or Plains, Ga.

Moreover, it is instrumental in the deterioration of United States-Soviet relations, aside from annoying such traditional American allies as Argentina or Uruguay. Worse, it sounds like a piece of cheap rhetoric based on some religious principle, or looks very much like a new form of moral interventionism.

Those who live amid the persistent anti-Americanism of the third world are quite bewildered by such an analysis of Mr. Carter's human rights policy. It should be remembered that on this side of the world it is common to take the local manager of the Central Intelligence Agency or to link the President of the United States with the

ruling Thal general of the day and the American military attaché with the Chilean head of police.

Generalizations are to be avoided, but if one takes the history of Latin America and several African and Asian nations, one is to be excused for such reactions. After all, to say the least, it was a group of local American managers who persuaded the C.I.A. to topple President Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala. It was the White House that gave the green light to the financing of strikes against President Salvador Allende Gossens of Chile. And it was in American military compounds in Panama that several Latin American police officials learned the most advanced interrogation techniques.

For many nations, the cost of that ideology was very high. But the highest price was paid by the United States, with the loss of its youth in Vietnam and the loss of moral belief in the executive during Watergate. The same quest for moral integrity that drew the American people toward the "weird" Jimmy Carter during the Presidential campaign seems to have led the President to draw a line separating the White House from massacres and tortures practiced around the world in the name of anti-Communism.

From the moment Latin Americans, Africans and Asians started looking at President Carter as a politician interested in human rights, the United States Embassy ceased being seen by

thousands of third-world liberals as a headquarters for conservative maneuvers; it became identified with the nation it represents.

The United States isn't the unconditional ally of dictators and dictatorships anymore, and that irritates many authoritarian leaders and disorients many third-world Communists. The clear displeasure felt by authoritarian regimes and underdeveloped countries' dictatorships is quite understandable from a political standpoint; one can also analyze it in pseudo-psychanalytic terms.

In today's world, there are only two "Jocastas" playing a parental role in governments in countries where institutions are frail: the United States and the Soviet Union. Even if a government has not been brought into power by Washington or Moscow, it must choose a "mother" soon after being sworn in. Dictatorial regimes in the West tend to consider themselves offsprings of the United States; to demonstrate their love they profess passionate anti-Communism. But the moment the United States stops subsidizing violations of the rights of people accused of being Communists, "Oedipus" gets angry at the loss of support and the loss of maternal love.

Even the most down-to-earth torturer sees himself as an actor of a sacred drama when applying electric shock to someone accused of being a Communist. He considers himself a fighter in the same battle that pits the North

Atlantic Treaty Organization against the Warsaw Pact—even when the individual tortured is not a Communist but only someone who has helped a hunted friend.

Deep in his mind the torturer knows that there is no crusade at all, but he pretends there is. Now that the links between torture and the pursuit of Western values are being publicly cut off, that dedicated public servant is discovering that his promotion may no longer be linked to his expertise.

In countries where public freedom is curtailed, menaced or mutilated, every political action is aimed basically at either releasing people from prison or getting them into jail. There are those who want to release the prisoners or relieve the population of the fear of being detained, and there are others who want to lock you up or to spread the fear that you can be detained any time.

This may sound like a very gross simplification, but it is only simple, not gross. Speaking of simple things, it should be remembered that in tropical countries people simply do not understand how someone can die from the cold in winter.

The Dominican Republic citizen of 1965 or the Chilean of 1973 who had reason to feel rather uncomfortable when looking at pictures of Lyndon B. Johnson or Richard M. Nixon looks at Jimmy Carter today with some hope. For the last several years, citizens of the third world couldn't quite understand why so many poisonous mushrooms grew in the shadow of the American foreign policy. Today, it is the mushrooms that do not realize that the shadow is gone.

Elio Gaspari is political editor of the newspaper *Jornal do Brasil*.

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## Carter takes a long view

The creaks and groans coming out of Washington's foreign policy establishment should not be allowed to obscure the more interesting aspects of what is happening. President Carter is trying to modify some of the basic principles and assumptions of American policy. Among his immediate colleagues there is a great deal of agreement on these changes. Conflicts arise not so much between hawks and doves as between long-term and short-term considerations in the implementation of policy. Additional difficulties are caused because the new assumptions are not wholly shared or understood by Congress and public opinion.

American foreign policy since the Second World War has been through many phases but one of its consistent tendencies has been to see most world problems in terms of the confrontation with communism in general or the Soviet Union in particular.

At the height of the cold war foreign governments were expected to stand up and be counted on one side or other of the confrontation. Nonalignment was regarded with disfavor while governments which lined up

with the United States were treated as friends regardless of their internal policies. Loyalty to the security interests of the "free world" was seen as more important than loyalty to its values. As a result the United States became the defender of the status quo while communists were seen as potential inheritors of the winds of change.

President Carter believes that America is the rightful leader and beneficiary of change. As Dr. Brzezinski, his security adviser, put it in an interview: "The role of the United States in world affairs should not be that of preserving the status quo or maintaining the balance of power but rather giving change positive direction. . . . I believe that the historical inevitability of our times is not some Utopian revolution but the increasing self-assertiveness of man on behalf of his own human rights."

To base a foreign policy on this belief requires enormous confidence in the basic strengths of the United States - not just military and economic but political and moral. It means putting as much faith in the strivings of

the human spirit as in the deployment of armies.

The long-term thinkers in Washington see that the Soviet Union has almost nothing to offer Africa except weapons and that almost all Africa's trading interests are bound up with the West, which is also the fount of new technology. This makes them confident that Cuban soldiers and Soviet weapons will eventually be ejected by the Africans themselves.

Short-term thinkers worry, with reason, about the damage that can be done in the meantime. Both know that the long-term policy would be destroyed by short-term measures. In other words, the question is not just whether to stand up to the Russians but how to do so without sacrificing the investment in another sort of influence which could be more lasting.

The dilemma is genuine and the answers may not come out right, but at least President Carter should be given credit for trying to find policies better and subtler than those of his predecessor.

**The Times (London)**

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